

Shelly Murney

## Artist Statement

My work is a project that examines the hinterland within the state of Washington. The word hinterland (late 19th cent.: from German, from hinter 'behind' + Land 'land.') means an area surrounding a town and served by it; the remote areas of a region; an area lying beyond what is visible or known.

The landscapes I am drawn to are, by their nature, worn, generally containing abandoned or deteriorating forms. They are the landscapes I drive through on a regular basis, ping-ponging between our farm life and town life. I am interested in these places because in ways, they inform me about my cultural identity, who I am, and where I fit into the world. I'm also interested in them because they are changing. The hinterland of the early 21st century is more of a figurative space than literal, and is rapidly becoming more so.

I make my photographs with film, using medium and large format cameras. I alter my film-based images with paint using color subjectively, referencing nostalgia, atmosphere, and memory. I print using traditional and alternative darkroom techniques, including silver prints, cyanotypes, and archival pigment prints. I also am a printmaker. I print my images with a non-toxic solvent transfer process onto Arches 88 and Domestic Etching papers.

My ideas about landscape were shaped primarily by my upbringing in suburban California. I watched as agricultural land and green spaces in my neighborhood were turned into malls, housing developments, and storage unit complexes. In suburbia, the landscape is an integral part of the consumer cycle, and the effects of excessive consumerism are readily noted. The suburban concept of landscape references a specific purpose; it is a commodity, either a passageway or a place, meant to be consumed. Suburbia finds no room in for open, unused space and is quickly expanding into unsuspecting places.

The remote areas around which I currently live include 5,444,000 acres of wheat and cattle. It's definitely rural and, at times seems like living in the middle of nowhere. But in reality, my immediate landscape is entirely modular. The canyon surrounding our farm is consistently logged. Hunters frequent the woods near our community to glean the non-native wild turkeys that plague our native ecology. Cell towers are popping up like noxious weeds. As our culture expands farther into the hinterland, I intend to continue my documentation and personalization of what is left of the areas lying beyond what is visible or known.